A4950-3

Trends—Consumer Attitudes and the Supermarket

1983 Update

Conducted for
Food Marketing Institute
by
Louis Harris and Associates, Inc.

Published by
The Research Division
Food Marketing Institute
1750 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006

Price: $15.00 Members
$30.00 Nonmembers

Copyrighted 1983 by
Food Marketing Institute
Printed in U.S.A.

The Food Marketing Institute (FMI) is a non-profit association that conducts programs in research, education and public affairs on behalf of its 1,100 members—food retailers and wholesalers and their customers in the United States and overseas. FMI's domestic member companies operate over 17,000 retail food stores with a combined annual sales volume of $125 billion—half of all grocery sales in the United States. More than three-fourths of FMI's membership is comprised of independent supermarket operators or small regional firms. Its international membership includes more than 100 members from 37 nations.

Table of Contents

Page

Introduction 1

Content of the Study 1
Study Design 1
A Note on the Tables 1

Survey Highlights 2

Chapter I: The General Outlook 10

Inflation, Unemployment, and Confidence in the Future 11
Anticipated Prices: Consumers Project Changes and Place the Blame 12

Chapter II: The Consumer's View of Supermarkets 13

Responsibilities of Supermarkets 13
Ratings of Supermarket Services 14
Other Important Supermarket Services 15

Chapter III: Saving Time and Money 17

Methods of Economizing 17
Who Are the Heavy Economizers? 20
Frequency of Economizing 22
Saving Time in the Supermarket 23

Chapter IV: Shopping Patterns 25

The Weekly Grocery Bill 25
Number of Supermarkets Used and Number of Supermarket Visits in an Average Week 26
Shopping Hours 29

Chapter V: Consumer Activism 31

General Consumer Activism 31
Supermarket-Related Activism 32
Activist Consumers 32

Chapter VI: Nutritional Content and Food and Product Safety 33

Nutritional Content 33
Consumer Behavior and Food Safety 35
Attitudes Toward Food and Product Safety 36
Product Tampering 38

Chapter VII: Groups Within the Shopping Public: A Look at Older Shoppers and Shoppers in Different Locations 43

Older Citizens as Supermarket Shoppers 43
Nutrition, Food, and Product Safety Concerns of Older Shoppers 45
Supermarket Shoppers in Different Locations 46
Nutrition, Food, and Product Safety Concerns of Shoppers in Different Locations 48

Methodology 49
Selection of the Sample 49
Sampling Error 51

Index of Tables

Page

Chapter I: The General Outlook

Table 1 Rising Prices vs. Unemployment: Which Is the More Serious Problem for the Country? 1974-1983 5

Table 2 Price Inflation Today Compared to a Year Ago: 1974-1983 6

Table 3 Ease or Difficulty in Making Ends Meet: 1978-1983 7

Table 4 How Subgroups of the Population Compare in Their Ability to Make Ends Meet: 1982-1983 8

Table 5 Expectations for Next Year's Personal Economic Situation: 1976-1983 9

Table 6 How Subgroups Compare in Their Expectations for Next Year's Personal Economic Situation: 10

Table 7 Price Changes Expected in Next Six Months: 1982-1983 11

Table 8 Blame for High Food Prices: 1979-1983 12

Chapter II: The Consumer's View of Supermarkets

Table 9 How Shoppers in Different Locations Compare in Their Views of Supermarket Responsibilities 13

Table 10 How Shoppers in Different Locations Rate Supermarket Service 14

Table 11 Shoppers Volunteer What They Feel Are the Two or Three Most Important Services Supermarkets Can Provide: 1982-1983 16

Chapter III: Saving Time and Money

Table 12 Methods of Economizing in Shopping and in Home Meal Planning and Preparation: 1974-1983 17

Table 13 Areas in Which Shoppers Who Have Been Economizing Feel They Could Economize More 18

Table 14 Areas of Economizing Ranked Among All Shoppers 19

Table 15 Who Are the Heavy Economizers? 1982-1983 20

Table 16 How Often Shoppers Use Supermarket Specials, Coupons, and Price Comparisons 22

Table 17 How Shoppers in Different Locations Vary in Their Use of Supermarket Specials, Coupons, and Price Comparisons 22

Table 18 How Shoppers Save Time in the Supermarket 23

Table 19 Changes in How Shoppers Save Time in the Supermarket: 1982-1983 24

Chapter IV: Shopping Patterns

Table 20 Family Weekly Grocery Expenses: 1981-1983 ..... **25**

Table 21 Average per Person Weekly Grocery Expenses: 1982-1983 ..... **26**

Table 22 Number of Different Supermarkets Shoppers Use: 1981-1983 ..... **27**

Table 23 How Often Shoppers Go to the Supermarket in an Average Week: 1981-1983 ..... **27**

Table 24 How Shoppers in Different Locations Compare in the Number of Different Supermarkets They Use **28**

Table 25 How Shoppers in Different Locations Compare in How Often They Go to the Supermarket in an Average Week **28**

Table 26 Time of Day Shoppers Usually Go to Supermarkets: 1981-1983 ..... **29**

Table 27 How Shoppers in Different Locations Vary in the Time of Day They Usually Go to the Supermarket **29**

Chapter V: Consumer Activism

Table 28 Consumers' Views on Taking Different Actions on Their Complaints **31**

Table 29 Actions That Consumers are Willing to Take: 1974-1983 ..... **31**

Table 30 Actions Shoppers Have Taken on Supermarket-Related Complaints: 1981-1983 ..... **32**

Chapter VI: Nutritional Content and Food and Product Safety

Table 31 Level of Shoppers' Concern About the Nutritional Content of Foods **33**

Table 32 Nature of Shoppers' Concern About the Nutritional Content of Foods **34**

Table 33 Consumer Behavior and Food Safety **35**

Table 34 Food and Product Safety and the Supermarket **36**

Table 35 Those Whom Shoppers Rely on to Ensure That the Products They Buy Are Safe: 1979 and 1983 ..... **37**

Table 36 Level of Shoppers' Concern About Tampering with Nonprescription Drugs on Retail Shelves **38**

Table 37 Actions Taken and Continued or Not Taken by Shoppers After Publicity About Product Tampering **39**

Table 38 Which Subgroups Have Continued to Check Products for Signs of Tampering **40**

Table 39 Views on the Cost of Tamper-Proof Packaging **41**

Chapter VII: Groups Within the Shopping Public: A Look at Older Shoppers and Shoppers in Different Locations

Table 40 How Older Shoppers Compare with Other Shoppers: An Economic Profile **43**

Table 41 How Older Shoppers Compare with Other Shoppers: Supermarket Shopping Habits **44**

Table 42 How Older Shoppers Compare with Other Shoppers: On Nutrition, Food, and Product Safety Concerns **45**

Table 43 How Shoppers in Different Locations Compare with Other Shoppers: An Economic Profile **46**

Table 44 How Shoppers in Different Locations Compare with Other Shoppers: Supermarket Shopping Habits **47**

Table 45 How Shoppers in Different Locations Compare with Other Shoppers: Nutrition, Food, and Product Safety Concerns **48**

Methodology

Table 46 Demographic Profile of Supermarket Shoppers **49**

Introduction

In 1974 the Food Marketing Institute initiated a series of consumer attitude surveys designed to identify the changing needs, values, and priorities of the American consumer. The present study is the twelfth in this series. *Trends 1983* continues to track and evaluate the major issues and trends from previous years while adding coverage of new issues that are likely to capture the attention of consumers over the next few years.

Content of the Study

The major trend lines continued from the previous studies include

- consumers' outlook on the economy, including personal expectations and predictions for price changes in the near future
- attitudes about supermarket responsibilities and evaluations of supermarket performance
- economizing measures in food shopping and meal preparation
- buying habits and shopping behavior and
- general consumer activism.

In addition to reporting on these issues of long-standing interest to the industry, *Trends 1983* provides an update on the following topics initiated in previous years:

- portraits of the most economy-conscious shoppers
- the frequency with which shoppers use supermarket specials and coupons and compare prices
- strategies employed to save time in the supermarket and
- weekly food shopping expenditures.

This year's study also focuses on two particularly timely subjects:

- the level and nature of consumer concerns about nutrition and the ingredients of the foods consumers buy and eat and
- actions taken by consumers in response to news of last year's tragic product-tampering incidents.

In Chapter VII, the survey singles out two groups in the population for special analysis, examining how they differ from consumers as a whole in their shopping priorities, behaviors, expectations, and concerns:

- *Shoppers in Different Geographic Locations:* Consumers who live in major metropolitan areas, suburbs, and small town and rural areas; and consumers in the East, Midwest, South, and West.
- *Shoppers Aged 65 and Over:* Older shoppers, who are a growing segment of the population with differing demographic characteristics (size of household, income, and so on) and who have special consumer needs.

Other key consumer groups considered in this analysis, as in previous years, include

- women, both working and nonworking, and
- men, including male principal shoppers.

A demographic profile of the total sample with weighted and unweighted percentages appears at the end of this report in the "Methodology" section. Additional copies of the report and additional data may be obtained from the Food Marketing Institute.

Study Design

The data for this survey are based on telephone interviews with a representative nationwide sample of 1,001 male and female shoppers, conducted in January, 1983. The sample was controlled to consist of 60 percent female and 40 percent male heads of households and was then weighted to an 80 percent female-20 percent male ratio to maintain comparability with previous studies in the *Trends* series.

A Note on the Tables

Presented directly beneath the title of each table is a description of the *base*, that is, the group of respondents of whom the question was asked. The exact number of respondents in this base group, either in total or as broken out into subgroups, is provided for all nontrend tables. The percentages shown in each table are calculated on this base number. It should be noted that these percentages may not always add up to 100 percent because of rounding or the acceptance of multiple responses.

For each table, the wording of the question as it was asked this year is provided; any changes in wording from previous years are noted on the table.

Survey Highlights

The following is an overview and summary of the most important findings of *Trends 1983:*

1. *As the rate of unemployment has climbed to a new high, so has public recognition of the problem.* In 1983, a substantial 73 percent of the public, the highest proportion in nearly 10 years, feel that unemployment is a greater problem than rising prices.

2. *There has been a dramatic rise in the percentage of consumers who perceive that inflation has slowed.* While in 1982, 24 percent believed prices had risen less rapidly, stayed the same, or had gone down, this percentage increased significantly to 45 percent in 1983.

3. *The proportion of families that finds it harder to make ends meet has declined.* The percentage of families that finds it harder to make ends meet dropped five percentage points from 1982 to 1983 from 60 percent to 55 percent. The proportion of families seeing no change in their ability to make ends meet rose from 34 percent to 39 percent.

4. *While most consumers still believe that supermarket prices will rise in 1983, the proportion that foresees a sharp rise has dropped by one-half since 1982.* About seven in 10 (71 percent) of consumers believe that supermarket prices will get a good deal more expensive or a little more expensive. However, in 1983, only 15 percent anticipate a *sharp* rise, compared to 30 percent in 1982.

5. *In eleven key service areas, consumers consistently give supermarkets high performance ratings.* For each area, 70 percent or more of shoppers that feel supermarkets are responsible for that service give supermarkets positive ratings; these proportions are essentially unchanged from 1982.

6. *Since 1982, customers' priorities have changed slightly in the supermarket services that are important to them.* In 1982, when the shopping public was asked to volunteer the two or three most important supermarket services, "good or low prices" ranked first; in 1983, it has fallen to third place. "Fast checkout" has moved up from second to first place, and "variety, a wide selection" has moved up from third to second. "Courteous, friendly employees" shows one of the largest percentage-point shifts, up from 18 percent in 1982 to 28 percent in 1983.

7. *The four most popular methods of economizing remain unchanged from 1982.* About three in four consumers continue to "do more with leftovers," "stock up when they find a good bargain," "make use of price-off coupons," and "buy products on special even if they hadn't planned to do so."

8. *Eating out less often is the one method of economizing that has fallen in popularity between 1982 and 1983.* In 1983, 47 percent of the shopping public say they eat out less often as a means of economizing, compared to 52 percent in 1982.

9. *Consumers' average weekly grocery bills have risen steadily since 1981.* Per household, the average weekly grocery bill has risen from $55 in 1981 to $58 in 1982 to $60 in 1983. The per person average weekly grocery bill is $22, compared to $21 last year.

10. *General consumer activism is high in 1983, but it has dropped slightly since 1982.* In 1983, 77 percent of the shopping public already have refused or are willing to refuse to buy products that cost too much, a proportion that is down eight percentage points from 1982.

11. *Supermarket-related consumer actions remain essentially unchanged since last year.* In 1983, about half of the shopping public (52 percent) have returned products for a refund or exchange. Approximately one-third (32 percent) have made an in-person complaint, and approximately one in five (21 percent) have switched supermarkets out of dissatisfaction.

12. *Nearly all consumers are concerned about the nutritional content of the foods they eat.* When asked to volunteer the nature of their concerns, however, consumers evidence some confusion about what nutritional content is. While some name nutritional issues in the conventional sense, others express concerns about chemical ingredients, such as preservatives and flavorings. Most often mentioned are chemical additives. With regard to nutritional content in the strict sense, "vitamins and minerals" and "less sugar" are most often mentioned by consumers as concerns.

13. *Although substantial majorities of the shopping public in 1983 indicate that they are worried about food safety in general, the proportions show little or no increase since 1982.* More than 70 percent of the shopping public identify with each of five statements that indicate concern about the packaging, ingredients, freshness, and general safety of foods. Close to three in four consumers (73 percent), for example, say the statement "I avoid buying certain foods because I am concerned about whether they are safe" describes them very or somewhat closely.

14. *More consumers rely upon themselves than rely upon government, retailers, or manufacturers to ensure that the products they buy are safe.* Nearly half of the consumers (46 percent) rely upon themselves, and about one in four say they rely upon the federal government. Reliance on retailers is cited by only five percent; reliance on manufacturers, by 13 percent.

15. *More than eight in 10 consumers say supermarkets should refuse to carry allegedly unsafe products, but about the same percentage believes the food in supermarkets is safe to eat.* Even more consumers (92 percent) agree products should carry labels for allegedly unsafe ingredients. These proportions are essentially unchanged since 1982.

16. *When the publicity about product tampering appeared in the fall of 1982, half of the shopping public (50 percent) checked specific products for signs of tampering. Forty-five percent continue to do so in early 1983.* About half of consumers (49 percent) stopped buying products that they believed could be easily tampered with, and four in 10 (41 percent) continue to avoid such products. Six percent of consumers report they returned suspect products last fall.

17. *Nearly all supermarket shoppers (97 percent) say the statement "I usually check the packaging of the foods I buy to make sure it is in good condition" very or somewhat closely describes them.* Fully nine in 10 say "I almost always check the dates on dated foods" describes them closely.

18. *Publicity about product tampering may have reached its peak in the fall of 1982; still, in early 1983, a substantial majority of shoppers are concerned about tampering with nonprescription drugs.* More than six in 10 (66 percent) are very concerned about this possibility, and an additional 19 percent are somewhat concerned. It is no surprise, then, that most consumers (86 percent) think that the new tamper-resistant packaging is worth the extra cost.

Chapter I: The General Outlook

Inflation, Unemployment, and Confidence in the Future

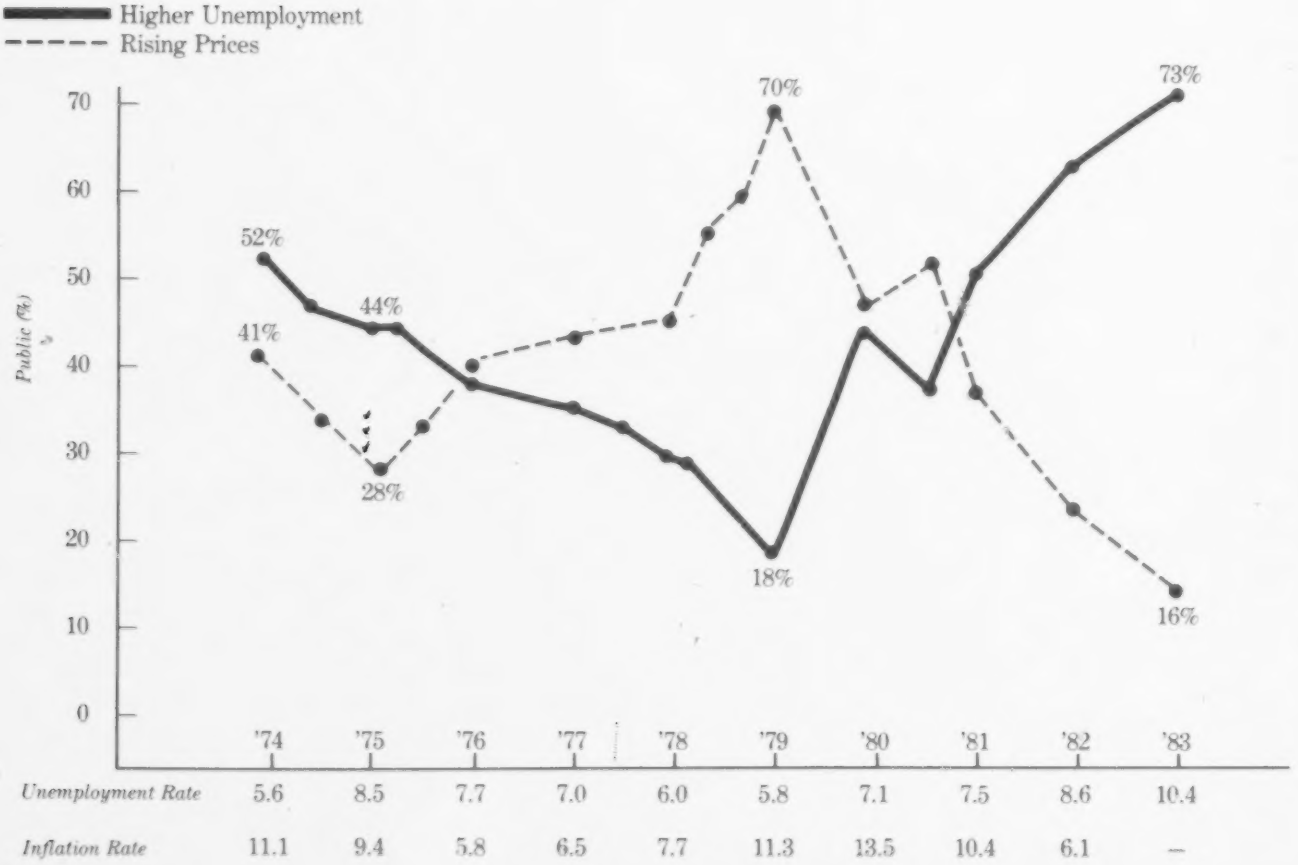
As the national unemployment rate continued to rise throughout 1982 to a new postwar high of 10.4 percent in January, 1983, public recognition of unemployment as a serious problem for the country continued to increase sharply. A strong 73 to 16 percent majority of Americans now think that unemployment poses a more serious problem for the country than rising prices. This is an impressive 10-percentage-point increase over the number of Americans who felt that unemployment was the bigger problem in 1982, and a 36-percentage-point increase over those who felt that way in 1980, when unemployment began its steady rise. In 1975, when the national unemployment rate had experienced its sharpest one-year postwar rise, concern about unemployment was expressed by 44 percent.

Concern about rising prices (relative to unemployment) has also declined since 1980, tracking a drop in inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index.

Table 1 **Rising Prices Vs. Unemployment: Which Is The More Serious Problem for the Country? 1974-1983**

Base: The total public and the shopping public*

Q.: If you had to choose, which do you think would be a more serious problem for the country--rising prices or higher unemployment?



	'74	'75	'76	'77	'78	'79	'80	'81	'82	'83
Unemployment Rate	5.6	8.5	7.7	7.0	6.0	5.8	7.1	7.5	8.6	10.4
Inflation Rate	11.1	9.4	5.8	6.5	7.7	11.3	13.5	10.4	6.1	—

*Data presented for 1981, 1982, and 1983 are from the sample of shoppers used for the *Trends* surveys. All trend data prior to 1981 are from The Harris Survey of national cross sections of the adult public, 18 years of age and older. Unemployment rates for 1981, 1982 and 1983 are January averages. All other years are annual averages.

When asked about prices alone, only 28 percent of consumers in 1983 say they believe that prices of most things they buy today are rising more rapidly than they were a year ago. Altogether, since 1974, the number of consumers who believe that prices are still rising in comparison to the previous year has dropped by 41 percentage points with the most dramatic drop taking place from 1982 to 1983. By 52 to 45 percent, shoppers in 1983 believe that prices are rising more rapidly than or as rapidly as last year, but this is a 22-percentage-point drop since last year, when the proportion was 74 to 24 percent.

Table 2 **Price Inflation Today Compared to a Year Ago: 1974-1983**

Base: The total public and the shopping public**

Q.: Do you think that the prices of most things you buy are rising more rapidly than a year ago, about as rapidly as they were then, rising but less rapidly than a year ago, staying the same, or are prices going down?

	Total						
	June 1974	Mar. 1976	July 1978	Mar. 1980	Jan. 1981	Jan. 1982	Jan. 1983
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Rising more rapidly	79	41	74	80	72	45	28
Rising about as rapidly	14	22	14	13	21	29	24
Rising but less rapidly	3	22	4	4	3	14	24
Staying the same	3	12	6	3	3	9	19
Going down	*	2	1	*	*	1	2
Not sure	1	1	1	*	1	2	3

*Less than 0.5%.
**Data presented for 1981, 1982, and 1983 are from the sample of shoppers used for the *Trends* surveys. All trend data prior to 1981 are from The Harris Survey of national cross sections of the adult public, 18 years of age and older.

The impact of a drop in the rate of inflation on family budgets can be seen in the continuing decline during the past two years in the proportion of shoppers who say they find it harder to make ends meet. In January, 1981, by 68 to 32 percent, the shopping public was finding it harder to make ends meet in their personal budgets. In January, 1982, this had declined to 60 to 40 percent, and in January of 1983, to 55 to 45 percent. In 1983, nearly four in 10 shoppers believe that there has not been much change in their families' ability to make ends meet.

Relative to other groups in the population, in 1983 a more significant proportion (60 percent or more) of adults in families with children, in households of at least five persons, with incomes of $15,000 or less, with less than a college education, or who are black find it more difficult to make ends meet. All of these percentages except for those for families with children and Hispanics represent a decline from 1982.

Groups whose perception of family budget difficulties has not changed significantly since 1982 include

- families with children
- two-wage-earner households
- families with incomes of $7,501-15,000
- college attendees
- Easterners
- urban residents, and
- Hispanics.

Table 3 **Ease or Difficulty in Making Ends Meet: 1978-1983**

Base: The total public and the shopping public*

Q.: Compared to a year ago, are you and your family finding it harder to make ends meet in your personal budget or easier, or has there not been much change?

	Total					
	Sept. 1978	Feb. 1979	Mar. 1980	Jan. 1981	Jan. 1982	Jan. 1983
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Harder to make ends meet	55	65	67	68	60	55
Easier	8	5	4	4	6	6
Not much change	36	27	29	28	34	39
Not sure	1	1	1	1	1	1

*Data presented for 1981, 1982, and 1983 are from the sample of shoppers used for the *Trends* surveys. All trend data prior to 1981 are from The Harris Survey of national cross sections of the adult population, 18 years of age and older.

Table 4

How Subgroups of the Population Compare in Their Ability to Make Ends Meet: 1982-1983

Base: The shopping public

Q.: Compared to a year ago, are you and your family finding it harder to make ends meet in your personal budget or easier, or has there not been much change?

		Jan. 1982			Jan. 1983		
		Harder	Easier	Not Much Change	Harder	Easier	Not Much Change
Total	%	**60**	**6**	**34**	**55**	**6**	**39**
Type of Family							
With children	%	62	8	30	61	6	32
No children	%	57	4	37	50	5	44
Two wage earners	%	48	8	44	51	8	39
Size of Family							
1	%	63	7	27	51	7	41
2	%	55	2	41	48	4	47
3-4	%	60	8	32	59	7	33
5 and over	%	67	8	25	62	5	34
Income							
$7,500 or less	%	76	1	21	69	3	27
$7,501-$15,000	%	65	4	28	63	4	32
$15,001-$25,000	%	61	7	32	55	6	38
$25,001 and over	%	47	9	43	43	9	47
Education							
High school or less	%	66	5	28	60	3	36
Some college and college graduate	%	50	7	42	50	9	41
Region							
East	%	59	5	35	57	6	36
Midwest	%	61	7	32	55	5	38
South	%	60	5	34	54	5	40
West	%	58	7	33	52	7	41
Size of Place							
City	%	56	6	36	55	7	37
Suburb	%	58	6	34	54	5	39
Small town/rural	%	63	5	32	55	5	39
Race							
White	%	58	6	35	53	6	40
Black	%	77	2	20	68	3	28
Hispanic	%	67	14	19	70	2	24

Despite 1983's high level of unemployment, more consumers in 1983 expect their economic prospects to remain the same in the coming months (48 percent) than expect them to improve (26 percent) or to worsen (23 percent). The 1983 measure of pessimism remains at about the same level as that of 1982, when 25 percent felt their situation would worsen; however, it represents a decline of six percentage points from 1980, when 29 percent were pessimistic about their personal economic situation.

The most optimistic groups of the shopping public include adults aged 18-39 (38 percent of whom feel their situation will improve), large families (among households with five or more persons, 32 percent are optimistic), and high income families (34 percent).

Among the most pessimistic are shoppers with an income of $7,500 or less (32 percent of whom feel their situation will worsen), and blacks (31 percent of whom feel that way).

Table 5 **Expectations for Next Year's Personal Economic Situation: 1976-1983**

Base: The total public and the shopping public*

Q.: Looking at the situation personally, do you think your own economic situation will improve in the next year, get worse, or remain about the same?

	Total						
	Aug. 1976	Feb. 1977	Feb. 1979	Mar. 1980	Jan. 1981	Jan. 1982	Jan. 1983
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Improve	30	41	26	24	28	28	26
Get worse	11	12	26	29	26	25	23
Remain about the same	53	43	45	45	40	43	48
Not sure	6	4	3	2	5	4	4

*Data presented for 1981, 1982, and 1983 are from the sample of shoppers used for the *Trends* surveys. All trend data prior to 1981 are from The Harris Survey of national cross sections of the adult population, 18 years of age and older.

Table 6

How Subgroups Compare in Their Expectations for Next Year's Personal Economic Situation

Base: The shopping public

Q.: Looking at the situation personally, do you think your own economic situation will improve in the next year, get worse, or remain about the same?

	Base		Improve	Get Worse	Remain About The Same	Not Sure
Total	**1001**	%	**26**	**23**	**48**	**4**
Size of Family						
1	148	%	21	27	45	7
2	314	%	22	22	52	3
3-4	367	%	29	22	47	3
5 and over	150	%	32	22	45	2
Age						
18-39 years	448	%	38	18	41	2
40-64 years	381	%	18	26	52	4
65 and over	163	%	11	27	54	8
Income						
$7,500 or less	140	%	19	32	42	6
$7,501-$15,000	189	%	21	23	51	4
$15,001-$25,000	232	%	27	23	47	4
$25,001 and over	345	%	34	17	48	1
Region						
East	265	%	30	20	46	3
Midwest	265	%	21	24	50	5
South	286	%	27	25	44	4
West	184	%	26	20	53	2
Size of Place						
City	281	%	27	24	47	2
Suburb	274	%	30	20	47	3
Small town/rural	444	%	24	24	47	5
Race						
White	871	%	27	21	49	4
Black	83	%	14	31	51	5
Hispanic	47	%	34	38	26	4

Anticipated Prices: Consumers Project Changes and Place the Blame

Since last year, the proportion of the shopping public which believes that supermarket prices will get a good deal more expensive or rise sharply has dropped by half from 30 percent to 15 percent. Of course, by 71 to 25 percent, consumers still believe that supermarket prices will rise rather than stay the same or go down, but fewer of the shopping public are pessimistic about the rate of inflation in food prices in 1983 than they were in 1982. This decline in anticipation of price rises has occurred since 1981, when 42 percent expected sharp rises in supermarket prices.

In contrast, between 1982 and 1983 there has been little or no change in shoppers' anticipation of rising costs for utilities, gasoline prices, clothing, or expectations of rising prices in restaurants. (The survey was conducted prior to publicity about cuts in oil prices by OPEC.) Only in the cost of housing is there a perception similar to that for supermarket costs – that prices may not rise so sharply; 28 percent anticipated sharp rises in 1982, but a significantly smaller 19 percent feel that way in 1983.

Table 7 **Price Changes Expected in Next Six Months: 1982-1983**

Base: The shopping public

Q.: What do you personally think will happen to (READ EACH ITEM) in the next six months – will it get a little cheaper, stay the same, get a little more expensive, get a good deal more expensive, or rise sharply?

		Jan. 1982	Jan. 1983				
		A Good Deal More Expensive/ Rise Sharply	A Good Deal More Expensive Rise Sharply	A Little More Expensive	Stay the Same	A Little Cheaper	Not Sure
The cost of utilities	%	57	53	37	6	1	2
Supermarket prices	%	30	15	56	20	5	3
The cost of housing	%	28	19	30	29	17	5
Gasoline prices	%	23	23	39	18	15	5
The price of clothing	%	21	17	42	30	7	5
Restaurant prices	%	17	13	47	29	3	8

As in 1982, nearly half of the shopping public today blame "no one" for high food prices. "The government" or "the President" are cited by 20 percent of 1983 consumers, and after that, there is a sharp drop in the percentages placing blame. "Middlemen" are cited by only six percent, down from 10 percent in 1982, and supermarkets are blamed by only two percent of the shopping public.

Table 8 **Blame for High Food Prices: 1979-1983**

Base: The shopping public

Q.: Whom do you blame the most for high food prices today — or don't you blame anyone?

	Total				
	Feb. 1979	Feb. 1980	Jan. 1981	Jan. 1982	Jan. 1983
	%	%	%	%	%
No one	39	40	37	44	46
The government/the President	27	23	21	14	20
Middlemen	12	8	13	10	6
The economy/inflation	x	x	x	5	7
Unions	6	3	3	4	3
Supermarkets	2	1	3	2	2
The public itself	6	4	6	2	3
Farmers	1	*	1	1	*
The weather	x	x	x	1	*
Oil companies	—	2	1	1	1
Wholesalers	*	2	1	1	1
Food manufacturers	1	2	3	1	1
Big business/corporations	x	x	x	x	1
Other	11	12	11	5	1
Not sure	x	x	x	10	10

*Less than 0.5%.
x = Not broken out, included in "other."

Chapter II: The Consumer's View of Supermarkets

Responsibilities of Supermarkets

As in 1982, majorities of the shopping public identify nine out of 11 possible services as being "the job" of supermarkets. Highest on the list in both 1983 and 1982 are "making sure their employees give good service to their customers" (97 percent), "getting you through checkout quickly" (95 percent), and "having readable and accurate shelf tags" (94 percent). At the bottom of the list in both years are "helping you pick the best value for the money" (49 percent) and "providing nutrition and health information" (37 percent).

Although shoppers in different parts of the country do not differ much in their views of supermarket responsibilities, there are some differences. On average, shoppers in the South tend to be somewhat more demanding of supermarkets than shoppers in general in four areas (making shopping easier and more pleasurable, keeping favorite products in stock, providing one-stop shopping, and helping save money with specials); Midwesterners are more demanding in one area (cheaper house brands and unbranded products) and less in two (specials and helping pick the best value for the money); and Westerners are less likely to demand one-stop shopping.

City dwellers are more likely to expect nutrition and health information. Suburban shoppers are less demanding in four areas: providing one-stop shopping, house brands or unbranded products, money-saving specials, and nutrition and health information. Small town and rural residents are more likely to want supermarkets to help them save money with specials.

Table 9 **How Shoppers in Different Locations Compare in Their Views of Supermarket Responsibilities**

Base: The shopping public

Q.: Do you feel that supermarkets are responsible for (READ EACH ITEM) or don't you feel that's their job?

		Size of Place			Region			
	Total	City	Suburbs	Small Town/ Rural	East	Midwest	South	West
Base	1001	281	274	444	265	265	286	184
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Supermarkets are Responsible for:								
Making sure their employees give good service to their customers	97	95	97	98	97	96	98	99
Getting you through checkout quickly	95	95	96	95	94	94	96	98
Having readable and accurate shelf tags	94	93	96	93	91	94	94	96
Making sure you don't buy old, stale, or spoiled products	91	90	92	91	89	89	94	94
Making shopping easier and more pleasurable	88	90	88	88	88	85	92	90
Keeping your favorite products in stock	87	89	86	87	87	85	92	84
Helping you by having a wide variety of items for "one-stop" shopping	80	83	76	81	81	77	85	74
Providing you with cheaper house brands or unbranded products	76	76	72	78	74	82	74	74
Helping you save your money with their specials	75	74	69	79	77	68	79	73
Helping you pick the best value for the money	49	49	46	51	47	45	52	54
Providing nutrition and health information	37	41	33	36	35	36	38	37

Ratings of Supermarket Services

Ratings of supermarket performance in the areas that consumers feel are the supermarkets' responsibility continue to be high. More than nine in 10 shoppers agree that supermarkets do an excellent or pretty good job in five important service areas: helping provide enough items for one-stop shopping; keeping favorite products in stock; making shopping easier and more pleasurable; making sure consumers don't buy old, stale, or spoiled products; and making sure supermarkets' employees give good service to their customers.

On only one item, providing nutrition and health information, do positive performance ratings drop below 80 percent, but only 37 percent of consumers feel this is a supermarket's job.

Again, there are a few variations in the way supermarket shoppers in different geographic locations view supermarkets' performance on key service factors. Shoppers in the South tend to be more satisfied than shoppers in general with service areas they say are the supermarkets' responsibility. They are significantly more likely to approve of supermarkets' performance in keeping favorite products in stock, in making shopping easier and more pleasurable, in having readable and accurate shelf tags, and in getting consumers through checkout quickly. In no area are they less satisfied than shoppers in general.

On the other hand, shoppers in the East are significantly less satisfied than shoppers as a whole in five areas: making

Table 10 **How Shoppers in Different Locations Rate Supermarket Service**

Base: Shoppers who feel supermarkets are responsible for each item

Q.: Do you feel that the supermarket in which you usually shop does an excellent, pretty good, not very good, or poor job of (READ EACH ITEM)?

			Size of Place			Region			
	Base	Total	City	Suburbs	Small Town/ Rural	East	Midwest	South	West
Supermarkets Do an Excellent or Pretty Good Job of:									
Helping you by having a wide variety of items for "one-stop" shopping	793 %	92	91	92	93	92	91	94	91
Keeping your favorite products in stock	860 %	92	91	90	93	91	87	97	91
Making shopping easier and more pleasurable	872 %	91	88	90	93	87	90	95	91
Making sure you don't buy old, stale, or spoiled products	902 %	90	84	89	94	88	91	91	88
Making sure their employees give good service to their customers	965 %	90	85	91	94	88	91	93	90
Helping you save your money with their specials	728 %	88	86	89	88	86	87	88	91
Helping you pick the best value for the money	473 %	86	85	87	87	83	84	93	83
Providing you with cheaper house brands or unbranded products	750 %	86	84	86	89	81	88	89	88
Having readable and accurate shelf tags	932 %	81	73	77	88	73	84	85	80
Getting you through checkout quickly	943 %	80	75	75	87	70	85	87	77
Providing nutrition and health information	359 %	70	65	68	75	60	74	78	69

shopping easier and more pleasurable, providing consumers with cheaper house brands or unbranded products, having readable and accurate shelf tags, getting shoppers through checkout quickly, and providing health and nutrition information. In no area, however, does a job rating fall below 60 percent positive, even in the East.

On many of these same key service factors, shoppers in cities are less likely to be satisfied than shoppers in small towns and rural areas.

Other Important Supermarket Services

After rating eleven specified service factors, the shopping public was asked to volunteer in their own words the two or three *most important* services they feel supermarkets can provide to consumers. This question was also asked in 1982, and some changes in the percentage of consumers mentioning each item occurred.

In 1983, "good or low prices" is mentioned by five percent fewer consumers and has fallen to third from first place in rank. On the other hand, "fast checkout" has risen in priority from second to first place, and "variety, a wide selection" has risen from third to second place. "Good service" is mentioned significantly less often, by seven percent instead of 18 percent, and has fallen to thirteenth from fourth place. Specific references to "good or better or fresh meat," "fresh products," and "fresh produce or fruits and vegetables" have gained in rank. General references to "quality products" occur less frequently in 1983 than they did in 1982.

Table 11

Shoppers Volunteer What They Feel Are the Two or Three Most Important Services Supermarkets Can Provide: 1982-1983

Base: The shopping public

Q.: What do you think are the two or three most important services your supermarket can provide? What else?

	1982		1983		Change In Rank 1982-1983
	Total %	Rank #	Total %	Rank #	
Fast checkout	30	2	39	1	+1
Variety, wide selection	27	3	29	2	+1
Good/low prices	33	1	28	3	-2
Courteous/friendly employees	18	4	28	3	+1
Keep shelves well stocked	15	6	17	5	+1
Clean store, cleanliness	15	6	16	6	—
Fresh products	13	9	15	7	+2
Fresh produce/fruits and vegetables	12	10	15	7	+3
Good/better/fresh meat	8	12	13	9	+3
Quality products	15	6	12	10	-4
Items well marked/clearly marked for price	8	12	11	11	+1
Items on sale, money saving specials	10	11	8	12	-1
Good service	18	4	7	13	-9
Grocery carryout service	4	14	4	14	—
Have advertised items in stock	2	15	3	15	—
No old/stale products	2	15	2	16	-1
Check cashing	x	x	2	16	x
Nutritional information	x	x	2	16	x
Generic/unbranded products	x	x	2	16	x
Better store hours, longer hours	2	15	1	20	-5
Coupons	1	18	1	20	-2
Convenient parking	x	x	1	20	x
Carts in good condition	x	x	1	20	x
Bakery on premises	x	x	1	20	x
All other	6	—	2	—	—
Not sure/no answer	4	—	4	—	—

x = Not broken out, included in "all other."

Chapter III: Saving Time and Money

Methods of Economizing

There has been no significant change since 1981 in the four most popular methods consumers use to economize on their food bills in their supermarket shopping. The four measures used by the largest number of shoppers are

- stocking up when you find a good bargain (75 percent)
- making more use of price-off coupons (75 percent)
- buying more store brands and lower price brands (69 percent) and
- buying products on special even if you hadn't planned to buy them that day (70 percent).

As in the two previous years, in the area of meal planning and preparation, most consumers say they are doing more with leftovers (76 percent), and many do more meal planning (63 percent) and more baking, canning, and freezing (52 percent) in order to save money. In addition, slightly fewer than half of all shoppers (47 percent) say they are eating out less often in an effort to economize on their food bills.

Eating out less often is the only economy measure that shows a significant decrease in usage, dropping from 52 percent in 1982 to 47 percent in 1983.

Table 12

Methods of Economizing in Shopping and in Home Meal Planning and Preparation: 1974-1983

Base: The shopping public

Q.: I'm going to read you some things that people have told us they do to economize on their food bills. For each one, please tell me whether this is something that you've been doing for a few years and are continuing to do now to economize, something that you've just begun to do recently, something you may do later, or something that doesn't apply to you.

	Total					
	Nov. 1974	Mar. 1978	Feb. 1980	Jan. 1981	Jan. 1982	Jan. 1983
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Been Doing or Recently Begun:						
Shopping						
Stocking up when you find a good bargain	67	70	77	79	76	75
Making more use of price-off coupons	66	65	70	76	73	75
Buying more store brands and lower price brands	77	70	73	71	72	69
Buying products on special even if you hadn't planned to buy them that day	x	63	65	68	68	70
Buying fewer luxury, snack items	75	67	72	66	57	54
Buying less meat	58	43	61	58	51	50
Buying in larger quantity*	55	54	59	55	47	47
Buying cheaper cuts of meat	59	47	60	52	49	46
Buying fewer convenience foods	64	58	x	x	46	43
Buying only what's on your list	x	x	x	x	49	48
Meal Planning and Preparation						
Doing more with leftovers	75	74	77	79	79	76
Doing more meal planning	63	65	68	67	66	63
Doing more baking, canning, and freezing	48	51	54	56	53	52
Eating out less often	x	x	x	x	52	47

*Prior to 1981, this item was worded: "Buy in quantity if cheaper."
x = Not asked.

A majority of shoppers who have been making use of price-off coupons for a few years (53 percent) feel they could economize even more in this area. This is the only economy measure in which a majority feel they could save even more. However, significantly more than four in 10 who have been buying fewer convenience foods; buying fewer luxury items; doing more meal planning; and doing more baking, canning, and freezing also feel they could do more in these areas.

Table 13 **Areas in Which Shoppers Who Have Been Economizing Feel they Could Economize More**

Base: Shoppers who have been economizing in each area for a few years

Q.: Do you personally feel that you've economized about as much as you can by (READ EACH ITEM), or do you feel that you could economize more if you had to?

	Base	Could Economize More	Economized As Much As Can	Not Sure
Shopping				
Stocking up when you find a good bargain	636 %	42	57	1
Making more use of price-off coupons	574 %	53	46	1
Buying more store brands and lower price brands	535 %	41	58	1
Buying products on special even if you hadn't planned to buy them that day	583 %	44	54	2
Buying fewer luxury snack items	362 %	46	53	1
Buying less meat	333 %	36	63	2
Buying in larger quantity	375 %	40	58	2
Buying cheaper cuts of meat	374 %	32	68	*
Buying fewer convenience foods	322 %	47	53	*
Buying only what's on your list	418 %	41	58	1
Meal Planning and Preparation				
Doing more with leftovers	675 %	30	69	1
Doing more meal planning	528 %	46	52	1
Doing more baking, canning, and freezing	425 %	46	54	1
Eating out less often	328 %	40	60	*

*Less than 0.5%.

Among all shoppers, the economy measures in which the largest number feel there is room for more personal savings are using coupons (32 percent), stocking up on bargains (28 percent), buying products on special (26 percent), doing more meal planning (25 percent, and buying more store brands and lower price brands (22 percent). Fewer shoppers view buying less meat, buying cheaper cuts of meat, and eating out less often as likely areas for further savings.

Table 14 **Areas of Economizing Ranked Among All Shoppers***

Base: The shopping public

Q.: Do you personally feel that you've economized about as much as you can by (READ EACH ITEM), or do you feel that you could economize more if you had to?

Base: 1001	Could Economize More %	Rank
Making more use of price-off coupons	32	1
Stocking up when you find a good bargain	28	2
Buying products on special even if you hadn't planned to buy them that day	26	3
Doing more meal planning	25	4
Buying more store brands and lower price brands	22	5
Doing more baking, canning, and freezing	20	6
Doing more with leftovers	20	6
Buying fewer luxury, snack items	17	8
Buying only what's on your list	16	9
Buying in larger quantities	15	10
Buying fewer convenience foods	15	10
Eating out less often	13	12
Buying less meat	12	13
Buying cheaper cuts of meat	12	13

*This table presents each item from Table 13 percentaged against all shoppers, instead of, as the question was asked, against only those shoppers who have been economizing in each area for a few years. This allows a common base for ranked comparisons among items.

Who Are the Heavy Economizers?

In an effort to better understand the economy-conscious segment of the shopping population, this year's *Trends* analyzes for the second year a subgroup called "heavy economizers." Included in this group are shoppers who have used for a few years, and are currently using, eight or more of the fourteen methods of economizing discussed earlier (see Tables 12 and 13). In all, 17 percent of shoppers in 1983 were identified as heavy economizers.

The most economy-conscious shoppers (21 percent or more in each group) are

- families with one spouse at home
- shoppers aged 50 and older
- low income and lower middle income families
- city dwellers and
- Midwesterners.

Since last year, of those who qualify as heavy economizers, there has been an increase of four percentage points or more in the percentages of

- working women
- single-person households
- large families (five members or more)
- young adults aged 18-24
- adults 40-64 years of age
- low income and lower middle income families
- city dwellers
- Easterners and
- Midwesterners.

Table 15 **Who Are The Heavy Economizers: 1982-1983**

Base: The shopping public

		Heavy Economizers	
		1982	1983
Total	%	**14**	**17**
Sex			
Men	%	13	14
Women	%	15	18
Working	%	11	16
Nonworking	%	17	20
Married			
One spouse at home	%	19	21
Two wage earners	%	12	14
Type of Family			
With children	%	15	17
No children	%	14	17
Size of Family			
1	%	6	14
2	%	16	19
3-4	%	16	17
5 or more	%	14	18
Age			
18-24 years	%	5	17
25-39 years	%	14	12
40-49 years	%	13	18
50-64 years	%	15	21
65 and over	%	20	23
Income			
$7,500 or less	%	14	23
$7,501-$15,000	%	17	22
$15,001-$25,000	%	15	15
$25,001 and over	%	10	13
Size of Place			
City	%	10	21
Suburb	%	12	14
Small town/rural	%	18	17
Region			
East	%	11	16
Midwest	%	16	21
South	%	14	14
West	%	17	19
Average Weekly Grocery Expenses			
Per family		$54	$60
Per person		$19	$20

Frequency of Economizing

Shoppers were asked in 1982 and 1983 how often they use supermarket specials, coupons, and price comparisons. The percentages are virtually unchanged since 1982. About two-thirds of all shoppers (67 percent) look for grocery specials in the newspaper pretty much every time they shop or fairly often, and more than half (57 percent) use price-off coupons that frequently.

Another economizing strategy used by many consumers is comparing prices. Almost half of shoppers (47 percent) compare prices at different supermarkets pretty much every time they shop or fairly often. When it comes to taking advantage of specials, consumers generally remain loyal to their principal supermarkets; less than one-third (29 percent) go to supermarkets other than their principal one pretty much every time they shop or fairly often, and over seven in 10 (71 percent) do this only occasionally or never.

Suburbanites are less likely to look for newspaper specials, and small town and rural residents are more likely to do so. Small town and rural residents are the least likely to use coupons every time they shop. Midwesterners are the most likely to use coupons — 47 percent in the Midwest use coupons almost every time they shop; Southerners and residents of the West are least likely to do so. Midwesterners are also more likely to look for newspaper specials.

Table 16 **How Often Shoppers Use Supermarket Specials, Coupons, and Price Comparisons**

Base: The shopping public

Q.: How often do you (READ EACH ITEM) — pretty much every time you shop, fairly often, only occasionally, or never?

Base: 1001		Pretty Much Every Time	Fairly Often	Only Occasionally	Never	Not Sure
Look in the newspaper for grocery specials	%	52	15	20	13	*
Use price-off coupons	%	38	19	31	12	—
Compare prices at different supermarkets	%	30	17	29	23	*
Go to supermarkets other than your principal one for advertised specials	%	13	16	48	23	1

*Less than 0.5%.

Table 17 **How Shoppers in Different Locations Vary In Their Use of Supermarket Specials, Coupons, and Price Comparisons**

Base: The shopping public

Q.: How often do you (READ EACH ITEM) — pretty much every time you shop, fairly often, only occasionally, or never?

		Size of Place			Region			
	Total	City	Suburbs	Small Town/ Rural	East	Midwest	South	West
Base	1001	281	274	444	265	265	286	184
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Pretty Much Every Time:								
Look in the newspaper for grocery specials	52	53	45	55	48	59	51	47
Use price-off coupons	38	40	41	34	39	47	33	29
Compare prices at different supermarkets	30	32	27	31	27	34	29	33
Go to supermarkets other than your principal one for advertised specials	13	14	13	13	11	14	12	17

Saving Time in the Supermarket

Consumers use a variety of strategies to save time when grocery shopping. The time-saving methods that at least half of the shoppers use consistently — that is, pretty much every time they shop or fairly often — are

- looking only at those items they know they need (62 percent)
- taking the prepackaged meat available rather than asking for a different cut (54 percent)
- buying larger quantities to avoid frequent shopping (52 percent) and
- going to the supermarket at a particular time of day to avoid crowds (50 percent).

As in 1982, in 1983, shoppers indicate their need for quick and efficient checkout lines; more than four in 10 shoppers (42 percent) report that to save time they consistently shop at a particular supermarket because it has a better or faster checkout system; and 15 percent say that they buy only enough to use the quick checkout line pretty much every time they shop or fairly often. Only 10 percent of shoppers report they try to save time by shopping frequently in a convenience store rather than in a supermarket.

Table 18 **How Shoppers Save Time In The Supermarket**

Base: The shopping public

Q.: People do different things to save time when shopping. For each of the following, please tell me how often you personally do this to save time when grocery shopping. Do you (READ EACH ITEM) pretty much every time you shop, fairly often, only occasionally, or never?

Base: 1001		Pretty Much Every Time	Fairly Often	Only Occasionally	Never	Doesn't Apply (Vol.)	Not Sure
Look only at the items you know you need	%	36	26	26	11	*	*
Take packaged meat available rather than ask for a different cut	%	33	21	24	18	4	*
Go to the supermarket at a particular time of day to avoid crowds	%	30	20	26	23	2	*
Buy larger quantities to avoid frequent shopping	%	28	24	31	16	1	*
Shop at a particular supermarket because it has a better or faster checkout system	%	23	19	22	30	6	1
Shop at a particular supermarket because it's less crowded	%	15	14	26	38	6	1
Buy packaged fruits and vegetables rather than bothering to have them weighed	%	12	14	40	33	2	*
Buy certain brands because they're more visible and easier to find	%	12	16	33	38	2	1
Buy only enough to use the quick checkout line	%	5	10	44	39	1	*
Go to a convenience store rather than a supermarket	%	3	7	42	47	1	*

*Less than 0.5%.

These percentages are virtually unchanged since 1982, but there have been some changes in the percentages of shoppers who engage in four of these timesaving actions at least occasionally – pretty much every time you shop, fairly often, and only occasionally:

- the percentage which shop at least occasionally at a particular supermarket because it has faster checkout systems has risen from 58 percent to 64 percent;
- the percentage which shop on occasion or more often at a market because it is less crowded has risen from 51 percent to 55 percent;
- the percentage which buy certain brands because they are more visible has risen from 56 percent to 61 percent; and
- the percentage which go to a convenience store at least occasionally rather than a supermarket has fallen from 59 percent to 52 percent.

Table 19 **Changes in How Shoppers Save Time in the Supermarket: 1982-1983**

Base: The shopping public

Q.: People do different things to save time when shopping. For each of the following, please tell me how often you personally do this to save time when grocery shopping – pretty much every time you shop, fairly often, only occasionally, or never?

		Jan. 1982			Jan. 1983		
		At Least Occasionally	Never Do	Doesn't Apply, Not Sure	At Least Occasionally	Never Do	Doesn't Apply, Not Sure
Shop at a particular supermarket because it has a better or faster checkout system	%	58	36	6	64	30	7
Shop at a particular supermarket because it's less crowded	%	51	43	6	55	38	7
Buy certain brands because they're more visible and easier to find	%	56	41	3	61	38	3
Go to a convenience store rather than a supermarket	%	59	39	2	52	47	1

Note: At least occasionally = pretty much every time you shop, fairly often, and only occasionally.

Chapter IV: Shopping Patterns

The Weekly Grocery Bill

For the third year, *Trends* asked consumers to estimate their weekly household grocery expenses. Overall, shoppers in 1983 estimate that they spend an average of $60 a week for their families. This figure has risen from $55 in 1981 and $58 in 1982.

Table 20 **Family Weekly Grocery Expenses: 1981-1983**

Base: The shopping public

Q.: About how much do you spend each week on groceries for your family?

	Total		
	Jan. 1981	Jan. 1982	Jan. 1983
	%	%	%
$0-$40	29	30	28
$41-$60	29	25	29
$61-$80	21	19	20
$81-$100	10	11	13
$101 and over	6	8	9
Not Sure/No Answer	5	7	1
Average Weekly Grocery Expenses	$55	$58	$60

For the second year, *Trends* also examined the shopping public's average *per person* weekly grocery expenditures. While overall the average per person expenditure in 1983 is $22, this figure varies significantly by family size with single-person households spending an average of $33 per week and households with five members or more spending an average of $16 per person. Furthermore, households with children spend less per person than do households with no children ($19 vs. $28). Regionally, shoppers in the East and West ($22 and $20, respectively) spend less per person than those in the South and Midwest (both $24), and shoppers who live in the suburbs tend to spend slightly more per person ($23) than do those in cities, towns, or rural areas ($22). Not surprisingly, heavy economizers spend somewhat less than the average ($20).

Table 21 **Average Per Person Weekly Grocery Expenses: 1982-1983**

Base: The shopping public

	Jan. 1982	Jan. 1983
Total	**$21**	**$22**
Principal Shoppers	$21	$22
Men	$23	$23
Women	$21	$22
Married		
One spouse at home	$20	$20
Two wage earners	$22	$22
Size of Family		
1	$33	$33
2	$26	$27
3-4	$20	$21
5 and over	$17	$16
Type of Family		
With children	$19	$19
No children	$25	$28
Heavy Economizers	$19	$20
Region		
East	$23	$22
Midwest	$20	$20
South	$20	$24
West	$23	$24
Size of Place		
City	$21	$22
Suburb	$23	$23
Small town/rural	$20	$22

Number of Supermarkets Used and Number of Supermarket Visits in an Average Week

More consumers do their weekly food shopping in one supermarket (50 percent) than visit two different supermarkets in a week (37 percent) or than visit three or more supermarkets (13 percent). The number of shoppers who visit more than one supermarket a week has shifted back toward what it was in 1981 with a corresponding decrease since 1982 in the number of shoppers who visit only one supermarket a week (a six-percentage-point decline).

Table 22 **Number of Different Supermarkets Shoppers Use: 1981-1983**

Base: The shopping public

Q.: About how many different supermarkets do you usually visit in a week to do your weekly shopping?

	Total		
	Jan. 1981	Jan. 1982	Jan. 1983
	%	%	%
1	46	56	50
2	39	34	37
3	11	8	11
4 or more	5	1	2
Average number of different supermarkets visited per week	1.8	1.5	1.6

Shoppers also are making as many visits to the supermarket in an average week as they did in 1982. This year 68 percent of shoppers visit the supermarket more than once a week, close to the 65 percent who did so in 1982 and down from the 72 percent who reported doing so in 1981. Overall, shoppers make an average of 2.3 trips to the supermarket each week.

Table 23 **How Often Shoppers Go to the Supermarket in an Average Week: 1981-1983**

Base: The shopping public

Q.: About how many visits do you make to the supermarket in an average week — that includes going to the same store more than once and going to different stores?

	Total		
	Jan. 1981	Jan. 1982	Jan. 1983
	%	%	%
1	26	31	31
2	33	32	34
3	21	20	20
4	8	7	8
5	4	3	3
6	6	3	3
Every 2 weeks	1	1	*
Average number of visits to the supermarket per week	2.6	2.3	2.3

*Less than 0.5%.

The likelihood of shoppers visiting more than one supermarket a week increases in urban areas (where 57 percent visit two or more a week) and decreases in small town and rural areas (where 45 percent do so).

Table 24 **How Shoppers in Different Locations Compare in the Number of Different Supermarkets They Use**

Base: The shopping public

Q.: About how many different supermarkets do you usually visit in a week to do your weekly shopping?

		Size of Place			Region			
	Total	City	Suburbs	Small Town/ Rural	East	Midwest	South	West
Base	1001	281	274	444	265	265	286	184
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
1	50	42	52	54	48	53	51	49
2	37	41	36	34	39	38	37	31
3	11	14	10	9	9	9	10	17
4 or more	2	2	1	2	2	*	2	3
Average number of different supermarkets visited per week	1.6	1.8	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.8

*Less than 0.5%.

In visits per supermarket, city dwellers are more likely to make more trips, and small town and rural residents, fewer.

Table 25 **How Shoppers in Different Locations Compare In How Often They Go to the Supermarket in an Average Week**

Base: The shopping public

Q.: About how many visits do you make to the supermarket in an average week — that includes going to the same store more than once and going to different stores?

		Size of Place			Region			
	Total	City	Suburbs	Small Town/ Rural	East	Midwest	South	West
Base	1001	281	274	444	265	265	286	184
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
1	31	25	28	36	27	34	32	29
2	34	31	36	34	36	34	32	35
3	20	25	22	17	22	19	20	22
4	8	10	7	7	9	6	11	5
5	3	3	5	2	2	3	2	6
6 or more	3	4	3	2	2	3	4	3
Average number of visits to the supermarket per week	2.3	2.5	2.3	2.1	2.3	2.2	2.3	2.3

Shopping Hours

Nearly equal numbers of consumers say they usually shop in the morning (27 percent), afternoon (27 percent), and early evening (23 percent). Since 1982, consumer preferences in shopping hours remain unchanged.

City dwellers are more likely to shop in the early evening than are suburbanites or small town and rural residents. Easterners are more likely to be early evening shoppers, Southerners are more likely to shop in the late evening, and Midwesterners are the most likely to be morning shoppers.

Table 26 **Time of Day Shoppers Usually Go to Supermarkets: 1981-1983**

Base: The shopping public

Q.: At what time of day do you *usually* go — in the morning, around noon, in the afternoon, early evening, or late evening?

	Total		
	Jan. 1981	Jan. 1982	Jan. 1983
	%	%	%
Morning	31	27	27
Noon	6	6	6
Afternoon	25	28	27
Early evening	21	26	23
Late evening	6	6	8
No special time (volunteered)	9	8	9

Table 27 **How Shoppers in Different Locations Vary in the Time of Day They Usually Go To the Supermarket**

Base: The shopping public

Q.: At what time of the day do you *usually* go — in the morning, around noon, in the afternoon, early evening, or late evening?

		Size of Place			Region			
	Total	City	Suburbs	Small Town/ Rural	East	Midwest	South	West
Base	1001	281	274	444	265	265	286	184
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Morning	27	26	29	27	29	32	22	27
Noon	6	7	4	6	4	7	7	5
Afternoon	27	25	27	28	23	25	30	34
Early evening	23	26	20	22	25	22	22	22
Late evening	8	8	9	7	9	5	12	5
No special time (vol.)	9	8	9	9	9	9	8	9

Chapter V: Consumer Activism

General Consumer Activism

In general, the shopping public is even less likely in 1983 than in 1982 to indicate willingness to take any aggressive action on complaints. Writing letters to congressmen, getting neighbors to sign petitions, and joining organized consumer boycotts against particular products or stores remain low in prevalence. Indeed, one in four consumers (23 percent) think that joining an organized boycott is ineffective, wrong, or illegal. Since 1974, the number of consumers willing to write letters to their congressman demanding that the government do something has dropped 26 percentage points (from 68 percent in 1974 to 42 percent in 1983), the number willing to get neighbors to sign petitions has dropped 14 points (from 44 percent to 30 percent), and the number willing to join consumer boycotts has dropped 15 points (from 38 percent to 23 percent).

The one action that most consumers (77 percent) are willing to take is refusing to buy products that cost too much. However, the number of consumers willing to conduct this kind of personal boycott is down eight percentage points from last year and shows a decline in prevalence since 1974 (down 12 points).

Table 28 **Consumers' Views on Taking Different Actions on Their Complaints**

Base: The shopping public

Q.: How do you personally feel about (READ EACH ITEM)? Is this something you already have done; something you are ready to do; something you can sympathize with but wouldn't do; or something you think is ineffective, wrong, or illegal?

Base: 1001		Already Have Done	Ready To Do	Sympathize With but Wouldn't Do	Ineffective, Wrong, or Illegal	Not Sure
Refusing to buy products which cost too much	%	70	7	14	6	2
Writing letters to your congressman, demanding that the government do something	%	16	26	37	17	4
Getting neighbors to sign petitions	%	14	16	48	16	6
Joining organized consumer boycotts against particular products or stores	%	7	16	48	23	7

Table 29 **Actions That Consumers Are Willing to Take: 1974-1983**

Base: The shopping public

Q.: How do you personally feel about (READ EACH ITEM)? Is this something you already have done; something you are ready to do; something you can sympathize with but wouldn't do; or something you think is ineffective, wrong, or illegal?

	Total						
	Nov. 1974	Apr. 1977	Mar. 1978	Feb. 1980	Jan. 1981	Jan. 1982	Jan. 1983
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Already Have Done or Ready to Do:							
Refusing to buy products which cost too much	89	82	74	86	80	85	77
Writing letters to your congressman demanding that the government do something	68	66	54	65	50	45	42
Getting neighbors to sign petitions	44	48	39	50	33	33	30
Joining organized consumer boycotts against particular products or stores	38	38	24	36	27	27	23

Supermarket-Related Activism

The decline in general consumer activism is reflected in a decline in supermarket-related activism. While a significant number of shoppers returned products for a refund or exchange in the past year (52 percent) and about one-third made an in-person complaint to a food store or supermarket manager (32 percent), the number of shoppers who say they have taken these actions in the past year has declined since 1981 (down five and nine percentage points, respectively).

Since 1981, the number of shoppers who have switched supermarkets because they were dissatisfied has declined 13 percentage points (from 34 percent to 21 percent), and the number of shoppers who told a friend or neighbor to stop going to a particular store or supermarket is down 10 points (from 22 percent to 12 percent). However, in the past year there have been no significant changes in these activities.

Table 30 **Actions Shoppers Have Taken on Supermarket-Related Complaints: 1981-1983**

Base: The shopping public

Q.: In the past year, have you (READ EACH ITEM) or not?

	Total		
	Jan. 1981	Jan. 1982	Jan. 1983
	%	%	%
Yes, Have:			
Returned products to a supermarket for a refund or exchange	57	53	52
Made an in-person complaint to a food store or supermarket manager	41	33	32
Switched supermarkets because you were dissatisfied	34	22	21
Told a friend or neighbor to stop going to a particular store or supermarket	22	13	12
Written a letter of complaint to a food manufacturer or supermarket	8	7	6
Joined a food co-op in your area	4	2	3

Activist Consumers

Activist consumers, shoppers who have already taken six or more of the general and supermarket-related actions discussed above (Tables 28-30), make up four percent of the shopping public in 1983. This does not represent a significant change from the five percent of the shopping public who were defined as activist consumers in 1982.

Chapter VI: Nutritional Content and Food and Product Safety

Nutritional Content

In 1983, for the first time in the *Trends* series, consumers were asked how concerned they are about the nutritional content of what they eat. A substantial 64 percent majority of consumers say they are *very* concerned about the nutritional content of foods. Another 28 percent are somewhat concerned, and only seven percent are not very or not at all concerned.

Nutritional concerns are common to majorities of all subgroups of the shopping public, but among those most likely to be very concerned are

- women who do not work outside the home (68 percent)
- urban dwellers (71 percent) and
- Westerners (69 percent).

Table 31 **Level of Shoppers' Concern About the Nutritional Content of Foods**

Base: The shopping public

Q.: Would you say you and your family are very concerned, somewhat concerned, not very concerned, or not at all concerned about the nutritional content of what you eat?

	Base	Very Concerned	Somewhat Concerned	Not Very/ Not at All Concerned	Not Sure
Total	**1001 %**	**64**	**28**	**7**	**1**
Sex					
Men	403 %	62	29	9	*
Women	598 %	65	27	7	1
Working	301 %	63	30	7	*
Nonworking	290 %	68	24	7	1
Type of Family					
With children	442 %	65	29	6	*
No children	539 %	63	26	10	1
Age					
18-39 years	448 %	63	32	4	*
40-64 years	381 %	65	27	8	*
65 and over	163 %	65	18	15	2
Size of Place					
City	281 %	71	23	5	1
Suburb	274 %	64	28	7	1
Small town/rural	444 %	61	30	9	*
Region					
East	265 %	67	26	6	1
Midwest	265 %	56	34	8	2
South	286 %	66	25	8	—
West	184 %	69	23	8	—

*Less than 0.5%.

Consumers' concerns about nutritional content of foods are not limited to what is strictly considered nutritional content but also extend to substances added for processing, preservation, and so on. This is evident when the shopping public is asked to volunteer what it is about the nutritional content of foods that concerns them the most.

Most frequently mentioned, by 27 percent, are chemical additives of various kinds (some of the specific items mentioned are flavorings, MSG, and steroids). "No preservatives" is mentioned as a concern by 22 percent; "freshness," "purity," or "no spoilage" by 14 percent; naturalness by 12 percent; and "no harmful ingredients" or "nothing that causes illness or cancer" by 10 percent.

Concerned with, nutritional content as it is more conventionally defined are

- the 24 percent who mention vitamin or mineral content
- the 21 percent who mention sugar content or "less sugar"
- the 18 percent who mention salt content or "less salt"
- the 10 percent who mention food value or nutritional value
- the 10 percent who mention "balanced diet" and
- the nine percent who mention fat content.

Calories appear relatively far down the list, mentioned by six percent, as do protein (five percent), cholesterol levels (five percent), fiber (two percent), and carbohydrates and starch (one percent each).

Table 32 **Nature of Shoppers' Concern About the Nutritional Content of Foods**

Base: The shopping public that is very or somewhat concerned about the nutritional content of what they eat

Q.: What is it about the nutritional content of what you eat that concerns you and your family the most? What else?

	Total
	943
	%
Chemical additives (e.g., flavoring, MSG, steroids)	27
Vitamin/mineral content	24
No preservatives	22
Sugar content, less sugar	21
Salt content, less salt	18
Freshness, purity, no spoilage	14
As natural as possible, not overly processed	12
Making sure we get a balanced diet	10
Food/nutritional value	10
No harmful ingredients, nothing that causes illness/cancer	10
Fat content, low in fat	9
Calories, low calories	6
Excess food coloring/dyes	6
Protein value	5
Cholesterol levels	5
Empty calories, junk food	4
Quality of food	3
Fiber content	2
Carbohydrate content	1
Starch content	1
Other	2
Don't know/refused	5

Consumer Behavior and Food Safety

As in 1982, in 1983, consumers were read a series of statements describing shoppers' attitudes and behaviors relating to the potential safety of food and asked how closely these statements describe them personally.

Three statements were repeated in 1983:

- As in 1982, about eight in 10 of the shopping public say that the statement "I feel concerned that some ingredients added to processed foods may be harmful or unsafe to eat" describes them very or somewhat closely.
- A stable 73 percent say that the statement "I avoid buying certain foods because I am concerned about whether they are safe" describes them very or somewhat closely.
- Close to three in four (72 percent) say that "I pay a good deal of attention to the list of ingredients on food labels" describes them very or somewhat closely, virtually the same proportion (75 percent) that said that in 1982.

There is little evident change since last January in consumer avoidance of foods because of safety concerns.

Two new statements were asked in 1983, and substantially larger percentages of the shopping public identify very or somewhat closely with both of them:

- Nearly all members of the shopping public (97 percent) say "I usually check the packaging of the foods I buy to make sure it is in good condition".
- Fully nine in 10 members of the shopping public say that "I almost always check the dates on dated foods" describes them very or somewhat closely.

The checking of packaging by such a large proportion of the shopping public in early 1983 may be related to the product tampering incidents of 1982. Actions taken by the public specifically in response to these incidents are discussed on page

Table 33 **Consumer Behavior and Food Safety**

Base: The shopping public

Q.: The following are statements that other people have made. For each one, please tell me how close it comes to describing you — very close, somewhat close, not very close, or not at all.

Base: 1001		Very Close	Somewhat Close	Not Very Close	Not At All	Not Sure
I usually check the packaging of the foods I buy to make sure it is in good condition.	%	85	12	1	1	*
I almost always check the dates on dated foods.	%	76	14	5	5	*
I feel concerned that some ingredients added to processed foods may be harmful or unsafe to eat.	%	50	29	11	8	1
I avoid buying certain foods because I am concerned about whether they are safe.	%	46	27	12	13	1
I pay a good deal of attention to the list of ingredients on food labels.	%	41	31	18	9	1

*Less than 0.5%.

Attitudes Toward Food and Product Safety

As in January, 1982, in 1983, consumers agree that supermarkets and manufacturers have responsibilities for product safety; but despite the tampering incidents during the fall of 1982, there has been no significant increase in the proportion of consumers who feel that way.

In 1983, by 92 to 6 percent, consumers agree that "products should carry cautionary labels for allegedly unsafe ingredients."

By 85 to 13 percent, they agree that "supermarkets should refuse to carry allegedly unsafe products."

One possible reason that these figures have not changed significantly is that a substantial majority of consumers (88 to 11 percent) feel that the "food in supermarkets is safe to eat," a proportion virtually unchanged from 1982.

Table 34 **Food and Product Safety and the Supermarket**

Base: The shopping public

Q.: For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly.

Base: 1001		Strongly/ Somewhat Agree	Strongly/ Somewhat Disagree	Not Sure
Products should carry cautionary labels for allegedly unsafe ingredients.	%	92	6	2
The food in supermarkets is safe to eat.	%	88	11	1
Supermarkets should refuse to carry allegedly unsafe products.	%	85	13	2

Presented with six possibilities, consumers were asked whom they rely on most to be sure that the products they buy are safe. Although this is a new question for the *Trends* series, it has been asked previously by Louis Harris and Associates. Table 35 presents both 1979 figures and the 1983 *Trends* results.

Since 1979, the percentage of consumers who rely upon themselves as individuals for ensuring that what they buy is safe has risen seven percentage points from 39 percent to 46 percent. This figure far outdistances those for the institutions and organizations presented on the list; of those institutions, the one most often singled out is the federal government. About one in four consumers rely upon the federal government for ensuring that products are safe, up from 18 percent in 1979 to 24 percent in 1983.

Reliance on manufacturers has dipped slightly from 17 percent to 13 percent, but not enough to be a significant decline. Reliance on consumer organizations has dropped from 19 percent to six percent.

Retailers are relied upon for product safety by a stable and relatively small five percent of the shopping public. State government follows at three percent in 1983, up from one percent in 1979.

Table 35

Those Whom Shoppers Rely on to Ensure That the Products They Buy Are Safe: 1979 and 1983

Base: The shopping public

Q.: As far as you personally are concerned, whom do you rely on most to be sure that the products you buy are safe—the federal government, the state government, consumer organizations, manufacturers, retailers, or yourself as an individual?

	Total	
	1979	1983
Base	1542**	1000
	%	%
Yourself as an individual	39	46
Federal government	18	24
Manufacturers	17	13
Consumer organizations	19	6
Retailers	5	5
State government	1	3
Other (volunteered)	1	*
None (volunteered)	*	1
Not sure	2	2

*Less than 0.5%.
**Harris *Perspective* Report Number Sixty. Based on a cross section of the total public, not just the shopping public.

Product Tampering

Because of the widespread publicity in the fall of 1982 about the incidents of product tampering with Tylenol, this year's *Trends* devoted a series of questions to the impact of these incidents on the shopping public.

The first question sought the level of consumer concern at the time of interviewing (January, 1983) about tampering with nonprescription drugs on retail store shelves. Not surprisingly, a 66 percent majority of the public report that they are "very concerned" about the possibility that such drugs might be tampered with on retail store shelves. An additional 19 percent are somewhat concerned, and 15 percent are not very or not at all concerned.

Most likely to be very concerned are city dwellers (72 percent) and those with a high school education or less (72 percent). Somewhat less likely to be very concerned are those with some college education or a college degree (59 percent), senior citizens (58 percent), and men (55 percent). In all other subgroups, the proportion reporting a high level of concern is more than 60 percent.

Table 36

Level of Shoppers' Concern About Tampering with Nonprescription Drugs on Retail Shelves

Base: The shopping public

Q.: At this time, are you personally very concerned, somewhat concerned, not very concerned, or not at all concerned about the possibility that nonprescription drugs may be tampered with on retail store shelves?

	Base		Very Concerned	Somewhat Concerned	Not Very/ Not at All Concerned	Not Sure
Total	**1001**	%	**66**	**19**	**15**	*
Sex						
Men	403	%	55	21	23	*
Women	598	%	69	19	12	*
Working	301	%	69	18	13	*
Nonworking	290	%	69	20	12	–
Type of Family						
With children	442	%	69	19	12	*
No children	539	%	63	20	17	*
Age						
18-39 years	448	%	66	21	13	*
40-64 years	381	%	69	18	13	*
65 and over	163	%	58	21	20	1
Size of Place						
City	281	%	72	16	12	*
Suburb	274	%	65	19	15	*
Small town/rural	444	%	63	22	15	–
Region						
East	265	%	66	19	15	–
Midwest	265	%	66	19	15	1
South	286	%	65	21	14	–
West	184	%	68	20	13	–
Education						
High school or less	529	%	72	15	12	*
Some college/college graduate	465	%	59	25	16	*

*Less than 0.5%.

Two questions asked in 1983 were designed to find out how many consumers had taken actions in response to the product tampering publicity and whether or not they continue to take precautions.

Exactly half of the shopping public (50 percent) checked some specific products for signs of tampering last fall, and 45 percent continue to do so in January, 1983.

About half (49 percent) stopped buying products that they believed could easily be tampered with. Over four in 10 (41 percent) continue to avoid buying such products.

A majority of the shopping public (59 percent) talked about product tampering with friends or neighbors in the fall of 1982, and about one in three (32 percent) continue to do so.

Significantly fewer consumers talked to store employees or store managers about incidents of product tampering (12 percent) or returned products that they suspected had been tampered with (six percent). Less than 10 percent continue to do so: six percent still talk to store employees or managers, and two percent continue to return suspect products.

Table 37 **Actions Taken and Continued or Not Taken by Shoppers After Publicity About Product Tampering**

Base: The shopping public

Q.: Last year when publicity about product tampering appeared in the news, did you (READ EACH ITEM) or not?

Q.: This year have you continued to (READ ITEM) or not?

	Total			
	Yes, Did Take Action In 1982	Yes, Have Continued To Take Action In 1983	No, Have Not Continued To Take Action In 1983	No, Did Not Take Action In 1982
	%	%	%	%
Talk to friends or neighbors about incidents of product tampering	59	32	27	41
Check some specific products for signs of tampering	50	45	5	50
Stop buying products which you believed could easily be tampered with	49	41	8	50
Talk to store employees or store managers about incidents of product tampering	12	6	6	88
Return products which you suspected had been tampered with	6	2	4	94

Most likely to continue to check products for signs of tampering are

- families with children (55 percent)
- younger adults, aged 18-39 (55 percent)
- city dwellers (51 percent) and
- college attendees (50 percent).

Least likely to continue checking for product tampering are older shoppers (25 percent) and families with no children (37 percent).

Table 38 **Which Subgroups Have Continued to Check Products for Signs of Tampering**

Base: The shopping public

	Base		Have Continued to Check Products For Tampering
Total	**1001**	%	**45**
Sex			
Men	403	%	42
Women	598	%	46
Working	301	%	48
Nonworking	290	%	43
Type of Family			
With children	442	%	55
No children	539	%	37
Age			
18-39 years	448	%	55
40-64 years	381	%	42
65 and over	163	%	25
Size of Place			
City	281	%	51
Suburb	274	%	44
Small town/rural	444	%	42
Region			
East	265	%	45
Midwest	265	%	42
South	286	%	49
West	184	%	43
Education			
High school or less	529	%	41
Some college/college graduate	465	%	50

Many manufacturers have responded swiftly to the kinds of consumer concerns reported here by developing and producing new tamper-resistant packaging, particularly for non-prescription drugs. The public responds extremely positively to this. Asked whether or not this packaging is generally worth the extra cost or not, by 86 to 11 percent, the public believes that it is.

Table 39 **Views on the Cost of Tamper-Proof Packaging**

Base: The shopping public

Q.: As you may know, many manufacturers will be changing the packaging of their products so that it will be more difficult to tamper with products on the shelves of retail stores. As a result, some products will cost more. Do you think these changes in packaging generally are or are not worth the extra cost?

	Total
Base	1001
	%
Generally worth extra cost	86
Generally not worth extra cost	11
Not sure	2

Chapter VII: Groups Within the Shopping Public—A Look at Older Shoppers and Shoppers in Different Locations

Older Citizens as Supermarket Shoppers

Older shoppers' attitudes and behaviors as consumers are influenced to a large degree by their special living circumstances and economic situation.

Almost half of shoppers aged 65 and over (44 percent) live alone. Nearly all the rest (44 percent) live in households with two persons. Only 10 percent live in a household of three or four persons.

Nearly four in 10 (36 percent) have incomes of $7,500 or less, and a majority (62 percent) have incomes of $15,000 or less. Only 19 percent have incomes exceeding $15,000.

Not too surprisingly, then, it has been harder for nearly half (48 percent) to make ends meet in the past year. This is a lower proportion, however, than among the shopping public as a whole, 55 percent of whom had a harder time in the past year. The same proportion of older shoppers (49 percent) say things remained the same as say it was harder than last year to make ends meet (48 percent).

Older shoppers are more likely than others to expect their personal economic situation to remain the same (54 percent) rather than to expect it to worsen (27 percent). They are less likely than others to expect it to improve (11 percent).

This is consistent with findings in other Harris surveys that adults aged 65 and over, while living on considerably reduced incomes, have lower expenses and more stability in their cost of living than younger adults, who must, for example, meet increased mortgage expenses and the expenses of raising children. Older citizens have, in addition, lower expectations for future improvements in lifestyle.

Average weekly family grocery expenses are $40 (compared to $60 for the shopping public as a whole) and the average per person expenditure is $36 (compared to $22 for the rest of the shopping public). These two figures are similar because older persons generally live in smaller households.

Table 40 **How Older Shoppers Compare with Other Shoppers: An Economic Profile**

	Total	65 and Over
Base	1001	163
	%	%
Family Size		
1	15	44
2	30	44
3-4	38	10
5 and over	15	–
Income		
$7,500 or less	15	36
$7,501-$15,000	19	26
$15,001-$25,000	23	12
$25,001 and over	34	7
Difficulty in Making Ends Meet Compared to Last Year		
Harder	55	48
Easier	6	4
Not much change	39	49
Personal Economic Situation in Next Year		
Improve	26	11
Get worse	23	27
Remain the same	48	54
Average Weekly Grocery Expenses		
Per family	$60	$40
Per person	$22	$36

Older shoppers are somewhat more likely to be heavy economizers than are members of the shopping public as a whole. About one in four (23 percent) qualify as heavy economizers, compared to 17 percent of the public as a whole. They are considerably more likely than the public as a whole to look for grocery specials in newspapers and to compare prices at different supermarkets. They are as likely, but no more so, to use price-off coupons and to go to supermarkets other than their principal one for advertised specials.

Older persons are less likely to make frequent trips to the supermarket (2.0 vs. 2.3).

Older shoppers are considerably less likely to shop in the evenings (10 percent vs. 31 percent of the shopping public as a whole) and more of them shop in the mornings (39 percent vs. 27 percent).

Table 41 **How Older Shoppers Compare with Other Shoppers: Supermarket Shopping Habits**

	Total	65 and Over
Base	1001	163
	%	%
Economizing (Pretty Much Every Time You Shop)		
Look for grocery specials in the newspaper	52	65
Use price-off coupons	38	41
Compare prices at different supermarkets	30	43
Go to supermarkets other than principal one for advertised specials	13	16
Heavy Economizers	17	23
Time of Day for Supermarket Shopping		
Morning	27	39
Noon	6	9
Afternoon	27	30
Early evening	23	7
Late evening	8	3
No special time (vol.)	9	13
Number of Different Supermarkets Visited in a Week (Average)	1.6	1.7
Number of Visits to the Supermarket in a Week (Average)	2.3	2.0

Nutrition, Food, and Product Safety Concerns of Older Shoppers

Older shoppers resemble the shopping public as a whole in the way they view the supermarket's responsibility to provide nutrition and health information. They are significantly more likely than other consumers, however, to pay attention to ingredients listed on food labels and significantly less likely to be concerned about shelf tampering with nonprescription drugs.

Table 42 **How Older Shoppers Compare with Other Shoppers on Nutrition, Food, and Product Safety Concerns**

	Total	65 and Over
Base	1001	163
	%	%
Feel providing nutrition and health information is a supermarket's responsibility	37	38
Very concerned about nutritional content of what I eat	64	65
Very concerned about shelf tampering with nonprescription drugs	66	58
Feel concerned that some ingredients added to processed foods may be harmful or unsafe to eat	50	48
Avoid buying certain foods because I am concerned about whether they are safe	46	48
Pay a good deal of attention to ingredients listed on food labels	41	49

Supermarket Shoppers in Different Locations

Throughout this report supermarket shoppers are examined in two different kinds of residential categories: those who reside in cities, suburbs, and small town and rural areas are compared to one another and to the total public, and those who reside in different regions of the country are compared. The following tables and text compile some of those data and comparisons for more comprehensive analysis.

Shoppers in cities, suburbs, and small town and rural locations do not differ significantly by size of family. By region, there is one significant difference. Adults living in the West are more likely to live in one or two-person households than they are to live in larger families, and the opposite is true in other regions of the country.

In the suburbs, incomes of $25,001 or more are common to 45 percent of households. In small town and rural areas of the country, shoppers are much more likely to have incomes under $15,000 (39 percent).

Not surprisingly, then, the average weekly grocery expenses per family in the suburbs are higher; and in small town and rural areas, they are lower.

In "difficulty in making ends meet over the past year," there are no signficant differences between families living in cities, suburbs, and small town and rural areas or between families living in different regions.

Residents of suburbs and in the East are the most optimistic when looking at their personal economic situation for the next year with 30 percent in each area saying they feel it will improve.

Table 43 **How Shoppers in Different Locations Compare with Other Shoppers: an Economic Profile**

		Size of Place			Region			
	Total	City	Suburbs	Small Town/ Rural	East	Midwest	South	West
Base	1001	281	274	444	265	265	286	184
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Family Size								
1	15	13	15	16	16	14	13	17
2	30	31	29	29	26	27	32	35
3-4	38	39	36	39	40	40	37	37
5 and over	15	14	18	14	15	18	16	10
Income								
$7,500 or less	15	15	9	17	12	16	15	15
$7,501-$15,000	19	18	13	22	20	20	17	17
$15,001-$25,000	23	23	23	22	27	21	21	21
$25,001 and over	34	34	45	27	31	32	35	38
Difficulty in Making Ends Meet								
Harder	55	55	54	55	57	55	54	52
Easier	6	7	5	5	6	5	5	7
Not much change	39	37	39	39	36	38	40	41
Personal Economic Situation in Next Year								
Improve	26	27	30	24	30	21	27	26
Get worse	23	24	20	24	20	24	25	20
Remain the same	48	47	47	47	46	50	44	53
Average Weekly Grocery Expenses								
Per family	$60	$60	$65	$58	$64	$58	$60	$60
Per person	$22	$22	$23	$22	$22	$20	$24	$24

Supermarket shoppers in the Midwest are among the most economy conscious: they are more likely to qualify as heavy economizers, more likely to look for grocery specials in the newspapers every time they shop, more likely to use price-off coupons, and more likely to compare prices at different supermarkets. Those in the West, on the other hand, are less likely to look for specials or to use coupons although they are somewhat more likely to go to supermarkets other than their principal one to search out advertised specials. Suburbanites are somewhat less likely to be heavy economizers.

Urban residents and residents of the West are likely to visit more supermarkets in an average week than suburbanites, rural residents, and residents of the other regions.

City dwellers are more likely to make more supermarket visits in an average week; small town and rural residents and Midwesterners are likely to make fewer visits.

There are few variations by time of day in the shopping habits of consumers in different locations although Southerners are somewhat more likely to go to the supermarket in the late evenings. Midwesterners are somewhat more likely to visit the supermarket in the morning.

Table 44 **How Shoppers in Different Locations Compare with Other Shoppers: Supermarket Shopping Habits**

		Size of Place			Region			
	Total	City	Suburbs	Small Town/ Rural	East	Midwest	South	West
Base	1001	281	274	444	265	265	286	184
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Economizing (Pretty Much Every Time You Shop)								
Look for grocery specials in newspaper	52	53	45	55	48	59	51	47
Use price-off coupons	38	40	41	34	39	47	33	29
Compare prices at different supermarkets	30	32	27	31	27	34	29	33
Go to supermarkets other than principal one for advertised specials	13	14	13	13	11	14	12	17
Heavy Economizers	17	21	14	17	16	21	14	19
Time of Day for Supermarket Shopping								
Morning	27	26	29	27	29	32	22	27
Noon	6	7	4	6	4	7	7	5
Afternoon	27	25	27	28	23	25	30	34
Early evening	23	26	20	22	25	22	22	22
Late evening	8	8	9	7	9	5	12	5
No special time (volunteered)	9	8	9	9	9	9	8	9
Number of Different Supermarkets Visited in a Week (Average)	1.6	1.8	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.8
Number of Visits to the Supermarket in a Week (Average)	2.3	2.5	2.3	2.1	2.3	2.2	2.3	2.3

Nutrition, Food, and Product Safety Concerns of Shoppers in Different Locations

City dwellers are the most nutrition-conscious and food and product safety-conscious supermarket shoppers. For all six indicators presented in Table 45, city dwellers are more likely to show concern or to take action. Suburban residents are less likely to feel that providing nutrition and health information is a responsibility of supermarkets, but they are more likely to be concerned about the ingredients added to processed foods.

Small town and rural area residents are less likely to avoid buying foods because of safety concerns or to pay attention to ingredients listed on food labels.

By region, there is no distinct pattern, but residents of the East are somewhat more food safety-conscious than residents of other regions.

Table 45 **How Shoppers in Different Locations Compare with Other Shoppers: Nutrition, Food, and Product Safety Concerns**

		Size of Place			Region			
	Total	City	Suburbs	Small Town/ Rural	East	Midwest	South	West
Base	1001	281	274	444	265	265	286	184
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Feel providing nutrition and health information is a supermarket's responsibility	37	41	33	36	35	36	38	37
Very concerned about nutritional content of what I eat	64	71	64	61	67	56	66	69
Very concerned about shelf tampering with nonprescription drugs	66	72	65	63	66	66	65	68
Feel concerned that some ingredients added to processed foods may be harmful or unsafe to eat	50	54	54	46	55	49	46	51
Avoid buying certain foods because I am concerned about whether they are safe	46	53	49	41	53	44	45	44
Pay a good deal of attention to ingredients listed on food labels	41	49	39	37	43	36	44	41

Methodology

Selection of the Sample

The data for this survey were collected from 1,001 telephone interviews conducted from January 14 through 24, 1983. The sample was drawn from the civilian adult population of the United States 18 years of age and older. Households contacted for the survey were selected by a procedure known as random digit dialing (RDD). This procedure ensures the inclusion of individuals with unlisted or not yet listed telephone numbers as well as those with listed numbers and thus provides a sample that reflects the total U.S. population.

Each household selected by the RDD procedure was screened first for the head of the household (either male or female) and then for recent experience with shopping for groceries. Only heads of households who shopped for groceries in the previous two weeks were interviewed for the survey.

The final sample was controlled to consist of 60 percent female heads of household and 40 percent male heads of household in order to increase the reliability of the male shopper samples. However, the sample was weighted to an 80 percent female-20 percent male ratio to maintain comparability with previous studies in the *Trends* series.

A profile of the total sample follows.

Table 46 **Demographic Profile of Supermarket Shoppers**

Base: The shopping public

	Number In Sample	Unweighted Percentage In Sample	Weighted Percentage In Sample
		%	%
Total	**1001**	**100**	**100**
Sex			
Men	403	40	20
Women	598	60	80
Working women	301	30	40
Nonworking women	290	29	39
*Principal Shoppers**			
Total	778	78	86
Men	213	21	11
Women	565	56	75
Type of Household			
With children	442	44	46
Two wage earners	259	26	26
Age			
18-24 years	60	6	6
25-39 years	388	39	38
40-49 years	169	17	18
50-64 years	212	21	21
65 and over	163	16	16

Table 46 **Demographic Profile of Supermarket Shoppers (cont'd.)**

Base: The shopping public

	Number In Sample	Unweighted Percentage In Sample	Weighted Percentage In Sample
		%	%
Income			
$7,500 or less	140	14	15
$7,501-$15,000	189	19	19
$15,001-$25,000	232	23	23
$25,001 and over	345	34	34
Race			
White	871	87	87
Black	83	8	8
Hispanic	47	5	5
Marital Status			
Single	116	12	12
Married	680	68	67
Separated/divorced/widowed	205	20	21
Education			
High school or less	529	53	53
Some college/college graduate	465	46	46
Size of Place			
City	281	28	27
Suburb	274	27	27
Small town/rural	444	44	45
*Region***			
East	265	26	26
Midwest	265	26	27
South	286	29	29
West	184	18	17

*Principal shoppers are those respondents who identified themselves as being the person in their household principally responsible for the weekly food shopping.

***East includes:* Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and West Virginia.

Midwest includes: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

South includes: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia.

West includes: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

Note: Percentages may add up to less than 100% because of nonresponse.

Sampling Error

It is important to note that survey results are subject to sampling error, i.e., the difference between obtained results and those that would be obtained by surveying the entire population. The size of this error varies with the size of the sample and with the percentage of respondents giving a particular answer. The following table shows the range of error for samples of four different sizes and at different percentages of response:

Sample Error ± at 95% Confidence Level for Samples of Four Different Sizes

Percentage Response	Size of Sample			
	1000	600	400	100
	%	%	%	%
10 (90)	2.2	2.4	3	7
20 (80)	2.9	3.3	4	10
30 (70)	3.3	3.7	4.6	11
40 (60)	3.5	4	4.9	12
50	3.6	4.1	5	12

For example, if the percent response for a sample size of 1,000 is 40, in 95 cases out of 100 the response in the population will be between 36.5 percent and 43.5 percent. This figure accounts only for sampling error. Survey research is susceptible to other errors as well, such as data handling and interviewer recording. However, the procedures used by the Harris firm keep errors of this kind to a minimum.

READER'S COMMENT FORM

Report: *Trends—Consumer Attitudes and the Supermarket 1983 Update*

YOUR COMMENTS COUNT . . .

FMI uses the comments it receives from readers like you to improve its research publications. Let us hear from you.

Page Number	I had trouble with this section because it seemed unclear.	It would have been easier if the following information had been included.

Other Comments:

Additional Copies Available:

Please send me _____ additional copies of this report at the listed price.

Name_____

Company_____

Address_____ City_____ State_____ Zip_____

Thank you for your cooperation.

YOUR COMMENTS PLEASE . . .

This manual is part of a library that serves as a reference source for members of the Food Marketing Institute. Your comments on the other side of this form will be carefully reviewed by the persons responsible for writing and publishing this material.

(FOLD ALONG DOTTED LINE)

Postage Will be Paid by Addressee

No Postage Stamp Necessary If Mailed in the United States

BUSINESS REPLY MAIL
First Class Permit No. 11911 Sec. 510 P.L. & R.

Food Marketing Institute, Inc.
1750 K Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20006

Research Division

(FOLD ALONG DOTTED LINE)

(CUT ALONG DOTTED LINE)

(CUT ALONG DOTTED LINE)